

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/IRN:BBMORTON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 081217

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BDIS IR US

SUBJECT: COMMISSION ON TWA 747 SALE

REF: TEHRAN 3289

1. DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 3 TALKED WITH TWA VICE PRESIDENT FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION BARRY WIKSTEN, WHO WELL INFORMED ON MATTER. HE SAYS AFP STORY IS BASICALLY ACCURATE, ALTHOUGH TWA HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF ASHRAF. HE SAYS THAT AT TIME CONTRACT WAS SIGNED THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT INCLUDED REFERENCE TO PAYMENT OF BROKER'S COMMISSION, BUT NO SPECIFIC WAS MENTIONED SINCE IT HAD NOT BEEN DETERMINED. TWA HAS SINCE THAT TIME PUBLICLY REPORTED PAYMENT OF COMMISSION IN ITS SUBMISSION TO SEC AND IN ITS ANNUAL REPORT. COMMISSION WAS MOST RECENTLY DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC IN MARCH 31 WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE.

2. WIKSTEN SAYS THAT TWA DENIES ANY WRONGDOING IN PAYMENT
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OF COMMISSION AND THAT IT IS STANDARD PRACTICE IN AIRCRAFT

SALES TO WORK THROUGH BROKERS. COMMISSION ON THIS DEAL WAS SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN USUAL BECAUSE MARKET WAS DEPRESSED AND TWA WAS BADLY IN NEED OF CASH. HE SAYS TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE TWA INTENT TO PAY BROKER'S COMMISSION WAS NEVER CONCEALED FROM TOUFANIAN. HE WILL CONFIRM TIS WITH EXECUTIVES WHO NEGOTIATED DEAL AND INFORM US.

3. AT TIME THIS IS WRITTEN, DUE TO WEEKEND TWA CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT NOT YET INFORMED OF GOI UNHAPPINESS. WIKSTEN POINTS OUT THAT NO PUBLIC DENIAL OF COMMISSION PAYMENT IS POSSIBLE. HE DOUBTS THAT TWA WILL WISH TO MAKE ANY GESTURE TO GOI THAT MIGHT SUGGEST THAT FIRM IS IN ANY WAY CULPABLE IN MAKING PAYMENT, BUT NOTES THAT TWA ALSO WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH GOI. HE SAYS TWA HAS ALREADY RECEIVED FULL PAYMENT FOR AIRCRAFT.

4. FYI: KWIATKOWSKI APPEARS TO BE VERY WELL KNOWN AS INTERNATIONAL AIRCRAFT BROKER. HE WAS RECENTLY SUBJECT OF ARTICLE IN FORTUNE WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS QUOTES HIS CLAIM OF BEING CLOSE TO IMPERIAL FAMILY RESULTING FROM HIS HAVING PILOTED SHAH ON HIS 1953 FLIGHT FROM MOSSADEQ. END FYI.

5. WIKSTEN WILL INFORM HIS SUPERIORS IN TWA OF THIS MATTER AND LET US KNOW WHAT ACTION THEY MAY DECIDE ON. WE WILL INFORM YOU AT ONCE OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. KISSINGER

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